Group to this end, headed by Foreign Secretary on the Indian side and Under Secretary for Political Affairs of the State Department on the US side, has been set up and it held the first meeting in Delhi on October 21, 2005. It has been made very clear to the US, including at the meeting of the Working Group that our commitments and obligations would only be those that have been spelt out in the 18 July Joint Statement. Each side expressed its preferences but no roadmap in this regard has been agreed to as yet. Our position remains that conveyed by Prime Minister, *i.e.* we expect a close correlation between the action to be taken by the US and India and that Indian actions will be contingent at every stage on actions taken by the other side.

Convention on international terrorism

184. SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether India, during the recent 60th Session of the UN General Assembly Session, while cautioning the world body against a selective approach to terrorism, called for global collective efforts for fighting the menace and to adopt a strong counter terrorism agenda;

(b) if so, the response of the world body thereto; and

(c) whether the draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism initiated by India was adopted; and

(d) if so, the details of the Convention?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Yes.

(b) The Outcome Document adopted by Heads of State/Government at the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the 60th Session of the UN General Assembly, held in New York from 14-16 September, 2005, strongly condemns terrorism "in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes, as it constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security". The Outcome Document also stresses the need "to make every effort to reach an agreement on and conclude a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism during the 60th Session of the General Assembly."

(c) and (d) Negotiations to finalize the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism, for which India had piloted its draft, are currently

taking place in the Sixth Committee of the UN General Assembly, with a view to reach consensus on the remaining outstanding issues.

Pendency of passport applications in Punjab

185. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated time required for the issuing of a new passport in Punjab circle;

(b) the number of application lying pending in Punjab for the purpose;

(c) the steps taken by Government for their quick disposal; and

(d) whether the staff strength is sufficient to clear the back log?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) The estimated time required for issuance of a new passport in Punjab is as under:

Passport Office at Chandigarh:	60-75 days
Passport Office at Jalandhar :	30-35 days

(b) The number of applications pending for issue of passports after receipt of Police Verification Report (PVR) as on 11.11.2005 in Punjab is given below:

Chandigarh		28598
Jalandhar	:	514

(c) and (d) The pendency is largely on account of shortage of staff to cope with the increasing number of applications and also shortage in supply of the requisite number of blank passport booklets by the India Security Press (ISP), Nasik. The matter of augmenting staff strength is already being pursued through a study by the Staff Inspection Unit of the Ministry of Finance. The issue of adequate supply of blank passport booklets is also being followed up continuously with ISP, Nasik and the concerned authorities in Government of India. However, at the same time, all efforts are being made to reduce the pendency to the maximum possible extent by using the existing staff.